

published. Based on such a determination, the regulatory authority may issue a decision on a complete and accurate permit application and shall inform the petitioner why the regulatory authority cannot consider the part of the petition pertaining to the proposed permit area.

(b)(1) Promptly after a petition is received, the regulatory authority shall notify the general public of the receipt of the petition by a newspaper advertisement placed in the locale of the area covered by the petition, in the newspaper providing broadest circulation in the region of the petitioned area and in any official State register of public notices. The regulatory authority shall make copies of the petition available to the public and shall provide copies of the petition to other interested governmental agencies, intervenors, persons with an ownership interest of record in the property, and other persons known to the regulatory authority to have an interest in the property. Proper notice to persons with an ownership interest of record in the property shall comply with the requirements of applicable State law.

(2) Promptly after the determination that a petition is complete, the regulatory authority shall request submissions from the general public of relevant information by a newspaper advertisement placed once a week for two consecutive weeks in the locale of the area covered by the petition, in the newspaper providing broadest circulation in the region of the petitioned area, and in any official State register of public notices.

(c) Until three days before the regulatory authority holds a hearing under § 764.17, any person may intervene in the proceeding by filing allegations of facts describing how the designation determination directly affects the intervenor, supporting evidence, a short statement identifying the petition to which the allegations pertain, and the intervenor's name, address and telephone number.

(d) Beginning from the date a petition is filed, the regulatory authority shall compile and maintain a record consisting of all documents relating to the petition filed with or prepared by the regulatory authority. The regu-

latory authority shall make the record available to the public for inspection free of charge and for copying at reasonable cost during all normal hours at the main office of the regulatory authority. The regulatory authority shall also maintain information at or near the area in which the petitioned land is located and make this information available to the public for inspection free of charge and for copying at reasonable cost during all normal business hours. At a minimum, this information shall include a copy of the petition.

[48 FR 41351, Sept. 14, 1983, as amended at 52 FR 49323, 49324, Dec. 30, 1987]

§ 764.17 Hearing requirements.

(a) Within 10 months after receipt of a complete petition, the regulatory authority shall hold a public hearing in the locality of the area covered by the petition. If all petitioners and intervenors agree, the hearing need not be held. The regulatory authority may subpoena witnesses as necessary. The hearing may be conducted with cross-examination of expert witnesses only. A record of the hearing shall be made and preserved according to State law. No person shall bear the burden of proof or persuasion. All relevant parts of the data base and inventory system and all public comments received during the public comment period shall be included in the record and considered by the regulatory authority in its decision on the petition.

(b)(1) The regulatory authority shall give notice of the date, time, and location of the hearing to:

(i) Local, State, and Federal agencies which may have an interest in the decision on the petition;

(ii) The petitioner and the intervenors; and

(iii) Any person known by the regulatory authority to have a property interest in the petitioned area. Proper notice to persons with an ownership interest of record shall comply with the requirements of applicable State law.

(2) Notice of the hearing shall be sent by certified mail to petitioners and intervenors, and by regular mail to government agencies and property owners involved in the proceeding, and postmarked not less than 30 days before the scheduled date of the hearing.

(c) The regulatory authority shall notify the general public of the date, time, and location of the hearing by placing a newspaper advertisement once a week for 2 consecutive weeks in the locale of the area covered by the petition and once during the week prior to the public hearing. The consecutive weekly advertisement must begin between 4 and 5 weeks before the scheduled date of the public hearing.

(d) The regulatory authority may consolidate in a single hearing the hearings required for each of several petitions which relate to areas in the same locale.

(e) Prior to designating any land areas as unsuitable for surface coal mining operations, the regulatory authority shall prepare a detailed statement, using existing and available information on the potential coal resources of the area, the demand for coal resources, and the impact of such designation on the environment, the economy, and the supply of coal.

(f) In the event that all petitioners and intervenors stipulate agreement prior to the hearing, the petition may be withdrawn from consideration.

§ 764.19 Decision.

(a) In reaching its decision, the regulatory authority shall use—

(1) The information contained in the data base and inventory system;

(2) Information provided by other governmental agencies;

(3) The detailed statement when it is prepared under § 764.17(e); and

(4) Any other relevant information submitted during the comment period.

(b) A final written decision shall be issued by the regulatory authority, including a statement of reasons, within 60 days of completion of the public hearing, or, if no public hearing is held, then within 12 months after receipt of the complete petition. The regulatory authority shall simultaneously send the decision by certified mail to the petitioner and intervenors and by regular mail to all other persons involved in the proceeding.

(c) The decision of the State regulatory authority with respect to a petition, or the failure of the regulatory authority to act within the time limits set forth in this section, shall be sub-

ject to judicial review by a court of competent jurisdiction in accordance with State law under section 526(e) of the Act and § 775.13 of this chapter. All relevant portions of the data base, inventory system, and public comments received during the public comment period set by the regulatory authority shall be considered and included in the record of the administrative proceeding.

§ 764.21 Data base and inventory system requirements.

(a) The regulatory authority shall develop a data base and inventory system which will permit evaluation of whether reclamation is feasible in areas covered by petitions.

(b) The regulatory authority shall include in the system information relevant to the criteria in § 762.11 of this chapter, including, but not limited to, information received from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, the State Historic Preservation Officer, and the agency administering section 127 of the Clean Air Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. 7470 *et seq.*).

(c) The regulatory authority shall add to the data base and inventory system information—

(1) On potential coal resources of the State, demand for those resources, the environment, the economy and the supply of coal, sufficient to enable the regulatory authority to prepare the statements required by § 764.17(e); and

(2) That becomes available from petitions, publications, experiments, permit application, mining and reclamation operations, and other sources.

§ 764.23 Public information.

The regulatory authority shall:

(a) Make the information in the data base and inventory system developed under § 764.21 available to the public for inspection free of charge and for copying at reasonable cost, except that specific information relating to location of properties proposed to be nominated to, or listed in, the National Register of Historic Places need not be disclosed if the regulatory authority determines that the disclosure of such information would create a risk of destruction or harm to such properties;